

Testimony on Senate Bill 622
State Senator Jim Holperin
April 6, 2010

Thank you Mr. Chair and Committee Members for this opportunity to tell you about Senate Bill 622.

SB 622 was drafted for service club and nonprofit foundations which typically have a number of local chapters at the state level. For example, Rotary or Lions International, the Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation or the National Rifle Association Foundation.

Often, these national or international foundations, with dozens or even hundreds of local clubs or chapters in a state, will authorize some of their local chapters to hold fundraising raffles. The umbrella foundation applies for and holds the raffle license on behalf of the local chapters.

Many of you are familiar with the raffles held by these local chapters of nonprofit foundations. Often, at an event, there will be several prizes offered and in front of each prize is a bucket into which you throw tickets with the hope that your ticket will be chosen.

Under current law, the Wisconsin Office of Charitable Gaming has determined that each bucket and the drawing associated with that bucket is a separate "raffle". Under Wisconsin law, no nonprofit organization may conduct more than 200 raffles per year.

You can see that, by counting each bucket and prize at an evening fundraising event as a separate raffle, the nonprofit organization may reach its 200 raffle statutory limit as soon as a few local clubs hold their raffle night.

Senate Bill 622 would change the state's raffle law to provide that, regarding these bucket raffles, you can have as many buckets and as many prizes as you wish so long as they are on the same date and at the same location...and the whole event will just count as one raffle for purposes of reaching the annual statutory limit of 200 raffles annually per nonprofit organization.

The statutory definition of "raffle" seems to anticipate this approach anyway. Currently, a "raffle" is defined in s.563.03(12m) as "a game of chance in which tickets are sold and a drawing for prizes is held".

The law change I've proposed will make it possible for larger foundations with lots of local clubs or chapters to raise money for their good causes, using a format that is productive and familiar to them, without running afoul of the state's raffle laws.